

South King County Projects Update

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South King County traffic closures this week

For more information visit our [construction update report](#).

Interstate 5

Monday through Thursday nights from the Pierce County line to S. 320th:

- We'll close the three left lanes of northbound I-5 from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. for pavement improvement work (see "What is dowel bar retrofit?" below)
- We'll close the left lane of southbound I-5 from 8 p.m. to 11 a.m. for paving, weather permitting.

State Route 161

- Monday through Friday we'll close the right lane of southbound SR 161 between Military Road and Milton Way from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for miscellaneous work.

What is dowel bar retrofit?

The pavement on I-5 in Federal Way is notorious for its rough ride. The road has suffered more than 40 years of heavy vehicles pushing down the concrete panels, causing wear at the joints leading to the "thump-thump, thump-thump" that you hear when driving this stretch of freeway. Lacking funds to completely replace the old pavement, we're using a pavement rehabilitation technique called [dowel bar retrofit](#) to make your ride smoother.

This technique was first used in Washington in the early 1990's. Crews [cut slots](#) across the joints between panels. We [jackhammer](#) out pieces of pavement at the slots and [insert dowel bars](#), which link the concrete panels and prevent the panels from rubbing against each other and becoming worn. Then we [patch the pavement](#) and use diamond-tipped saw blades to [grind the pavement](#) to a texture that helps tires grip the road.

Last year, we completed dowel bar retrofit on I-5 in the area of the [S. 317th HOV Direct Access project](#). Now we're performing the same work in the area of the [I-5 HOV widening project](#) between S. 320th and the Pierce County line. We expect this rehabilitation to extend the life of the pavement by 10 to 15 years.

Remove your studded tires by the end of this week

The last day to legally use [studded tires](#) this season is this Friday, March 31. Drivers using studded tires after this deadline could incur a \$101 fine.

Studded tires are legal only part of the year because of safety considerations and the damage they cause to highways. Studded tires wear road surfaces at a higher rate than other tires, causing an estimated \$10 million in damages each year to state highways. Additionally, research indicates vehicles with studded tires take longer to stop than cars with other tires in most winter driving conditions.

Highway advisory radio updates

Tune your radio to 1520 AM to hear a new project update each week on I-5 in Federal Way. Questions or comments? E-mail [Laura Johnson](#).

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